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Nomophobia, Action Orientation, Boredom, and Loneliness Among Youth

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Abstract

It is startling to learn that the average individual checks their phone 110 times per day-often times without even realizing it. Cell phone is seen as more than just a device; rather, it serves as the digital umbilical cord that connects us to a happy life. While smartphones leave their mark, their absence also has a measurable effect. The current study set out to look at the relationships between action orientation, boredom, loneliness, and nomophobia. The study followed a cross-sectional study design using a purposive sampling method. A total of 80 youth aged between 18-24 years, having proper access to an email account, and smartphone, and not having any known chronic psychological disorder, were selected from West Bengal (India). There was significant positive correlation between nomophobia and boredom. Correlational analysis of the data indicated that action orientation has a negative correlation with Nomophobia.

Keywords. Action-orientation, Boredom, Loneliness, Nomophobia.

Introduction

Nomophobia (No Mobile Phone Phobia) is defined as an involuntary fear and experience of panic that happen when a person loses contact with his or her mobile phone or is unable to communicate via it (Chóliz, 2010; Yildirim & Correia, 2015). Mobile phones have become the utmost necessary commodity in recent times. India is the leading country in the mobile phone industry nowadays. According to Shambare et al. (2012) cell phones are

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"possibly the biggest non-drug addiction of the 21st century", which may lead to severe technological dependence being the obvious paradox between empowerment, enlightenment, and enslavement. The term "nomophobia" was coined by the Post Office of the United Kingdom during a study in 2008 to describe a cluster of behavioral patterns linked to mobile phone addiction. Nomophobia comes under the DSM-IV classification of "phobia for a particular/specific thing". This dependency has significant psychological ramifications. The addiction is so high that it stimulates extreme fear or anxiety when thinking of losing the phone and that causes severe impairment in daily life activities. Boredom seems to arise when Individuals are prohibited from engaging in the desired activity or compelled to do the undesired. The inability to connect with current environment or on-going task also leads to boredom.

Study of Elhai et al. (2018) examined the effect of boredom on certain consumer behaviour. It was found that boredom increases the likelihood of developing smartphone addiction and making impulsive purchases. This finding lends support to the hypothesis that certain consumer actions may be significantly influenced by boredom as a negative feeling or mood. Another finding from this research is that smartphone addiction lessens the impact of boredom on impulsive purchases. Other studies also reported link between boredom proneness and problematic mobile phone (Wang et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2020). A significant correlation was reported between the level of social and emotional loneliness and Internet addiction among teenage population (Gezgin et al., 2018).

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981) "Loneliness is a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship, which happens when there is a mismatch between the

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quantity and quality of the social relationships that we have and those that we want". Loneliness can be triggered by genetics, culture, social and environmental factors, a severe loss or absence of social and interpersonal relationships, and an over-reliance on technology (especially the internet). Studies indicated the strong association between loneliness and maladaptive phone use (Hussien,2022; Kara et al., 2021). Aldalalah (2020) explored the relationship between nomophobia among students in Jordan and its impact on psycho-loneliness in his study. The result suggested the positive association between nomophobia and sense of psycho-loneliness among students. Individuals who are more action-oriented have higher performance efficiency (Kuhl, 1994) and the capacity to accomplish activities despite small setbacks or failures.

Action orientation is defined as the ability to control one's emotions, ideas, and behaviours in order to achieve one's goals. The inability to control these emotions, thoughts and behaviours is referred to as state orientation. That is, these people are unable to change their feelings, such as anxiousness, dejection, perplexity, and uncertainty (Kuhl, 1981). Individuals with a state orientation, on the other hand, are more likely to have continuous, ruminative thoughts about alternative objectives or emotional states, limiting the cognitive resources available for goal striving. In addition to the overall concept of action-state orientation three distinct features or dimensions were also proposed which are obsession, hesitation, and volatility (Kuhl & Beckmann, 1994). Błachnio et al. (2019) studied Self-Regulation and Self-Control in Facebook use. The findings suggest a connection between Facebook intrusion and self-control and action control. As anticipated, failure-related action orientation and low self-control levels were found to be predictors of Facebook intrusion. Their

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findings imply that individuals with poor self-control have issues with problematic Facebook use and addiction issues.

Mobile phones play an important role in our daily lives, especially youngsters are fascinated by smartphone's charm to a great extent. It keeps us connected with the whole world, provides entertainment, kills our boredom, guides us on unfamiliar lanes, eases out the payment modes, and manages our day-to-day living. However, over-dependency and the increased attachment towards mobile phones leads to disadvantageous effect. The present study aims to investigate the proneness to nomophobia in relation to boredom and loneliness among the youth population. We have objectives to assess the association between nomophobia and boredom, to assess the association between nomophobia and loneliness, and to assess the association between nomophobia and action orientation.

The following hypotheses were developed to examine the objectives of the study. H01 - There is no association between Nomophobia and Boredom. H02 – There is no association between Nomophobia and Loneliness. H03 - There is no association between nomophobia and action orientation.

Materials and methods

Participants

A total of 80 individuals aged between 18-24 years, having minimum educational qualification to read and write Bengali and English, having proper access to an email account, and smart phone, and not having any known chronic psychological disorder, were selected

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from West Bengal (India). The study followed cross-sectional study design using purposive sampling method.

Measures

Socio-demographic datasheet. An information schedule was prepared for collecting the Socio-demographic details of the participants.

Nomophobia Questionnaire NMP-Q (Yildirim & Correia, 2015). This 20-item scale comprises four factors namely not being able to communicate, losing connectedness, not being able to access information and giving up convenience. A 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was applied to each NMP-Q item leading to a summated total score. The higher score reflects the severity of nomophobia. In addition, the interpretation of the NMP-Q score into the level of nomophobia (out of a total score between 20 and 140) 20 corresponding to the absence; 21–59 corresponding to a mild level; 60–99 corresponding to a moderate level; and ≥100 corresponding to severe level. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for internal consistency of the questionnaire is .94. The four factor obtained as a result of the exploratory factor analysis corroborates the connection of the four dimensions to the theoretical construct of nomophobia, and thus ensures the construct validity of the NMP-Q.

Action Control Scale ACS24 (Kuhl & Beckman,1994). This scale is the English version of the German HAKEMP-24, and includes two subscales – Action-orientation subsequent to failure vs. preoccupation (AOF) – 12 items and Prospective and decision-related action orientation vs. hesitation (AOD) – 12 items. Each scale consists of 12 items which

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describe a particular situation. Each item has two alternative answers (A or B), one of which is indicative of action orientation and the other of state orientation.

Boredom Proneness scale BPS (Farmer & Sundberg,1986). A 28-item scale to measure the propensity to experience boredom. Items range from "1" (highly disagree) to "7" (highly agree). The level of internal consistency (coefficient alpha = .79) and test-retest reliability (r = .83) is found to be satisfactory.

Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell et al.,1980). A 20-item scale designed to measure one's subjective feelings of loneliness as well as feelings of social isolation. The measure has high internal consistency (coefficient alpha = .96) and a test-retest correlation over a two-month period of .73.

Procedure

Several prospective participants meeting the selection criteria were contacted through peer groups and university departments. A google form was created containing the required scales for collecting data, and the link was sent to the prospective participants' email accounts, and other social media accounts. Participants were subjected to provide first provide their consent, before administration of the study tools. Responses received through the link were then recorded for further investigation. Statistical operations of the collected data were done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 16.0. (IBM, New York). Descriptive statistics (such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were computed to describe sample characteristics. Correlational analysis (Pearson r) was done to find out the relationships between the study variables

Results

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Table-1 indicates that most of the participants were from urban areas (82.50%). The percentage of females was high (68.8%) compared to the male participants (31.3%). The mean age of the
participant was 22.49 years (Ranging from 18 to 24 years). 55% of the total participants had an educational qualification of PG level, and 25% with UG level of education.

Table- 1. Demographic details of the participants (N=80)

Demographics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Residence	Urban	66	82.50
	Semi-Urban	10	12.50
	Rural	3	3.75
Gender	Male	25	31.3
	Female	55	68.8
Educational qualification	UG	25	31.25
	PG	55	68.75
Age (years)	Mean 22.49	SD 1.41	Range (18-24)

Table-2 indicates an apparent variation in the arithmetical mean and standard deviations, in response to the Nomophobia Questionnaire, Action-orientation Loneliness, and Boredom Proneness and illustrates the significance of the statistical differences between the arithmetical means, and standard Deviations.

Table-2. Correlation (Pearson r) among the study variables (N=80).

	NMP-Q	AOFailure	AODecision	UCLAL	BPS	Mean	SD
NMP-Q	_					85.29	23.33
AOFailure	-0.160	_				4.25	2.41
AODecision	-.263*	0.439**	_			5.35	2.88
UCLAL	0.187	-0.260*	-0.351**	_		47.59	11.07
BPS	0.499**	-0.304**	-0.289**	0.293**	_	124.55	21.14

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Note. NMP-Q: Nomophobia Questionnaire, AOFailure: Action-Orientation Failure, AODecision: Action-Orientation Decision, UCLAL: UCLA Loneliness Scale, BPS: Boredom Proneness Scale
*p<0.05, **p<0.01

Results indicate a negative correlation between Nomophobia questionnaire and the Action-orientation Decision scale significant at 0.05 level and a positive correlation between Nomophobia questionnaire and Boredom Proneness Scale significant at 0.01 level. Action-Orientation Failure was positively correlated with Action-Orientation Decision significant at 0.01 level, and negatively correlated with Loneliness Scale and Boredom Proneness Scale significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level respectively. Action-orientation Decision scale indicates negative correlation with Loneliness Scale and Boredom Proneness Scale both significant at 0.01 level, and positive correlation with Action-Orientation failure significant at 0.01 level. Loneliness Scale indicates negative correlation with Action-Orientation Failure and Action-Orientation Decision significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level respectively and positive correlation with Boredom Proneness Scale significant at 0.01 level. Boredom Proneness Scale indicates positive correlation with Nomophobia Questionnaire and Loneliness Scale both significant at 0.01 level and negative correlation with Action-Orientation Failure and Action-Orientation Decision Scale both significant at 0.01 level.

Discussion

The present study aims to investigate the association of nomophobia with action orientation, boredom, and loneliness in youths. It was hypothesized that there is no association between Nomophobia and Boredom but the results reveal that Boredom proneness is positively correlated with nomophobia (H01). Bored adolescents are more likely to seek external stimulation to cope with boredom (Struk et al.,2017), and thus they may spend much time and resources on the internet (or via mobile phones), which further increases the risk of problematic behaviors, including problematic internet use (Nichols & Nicki, 2004; Skues et al., 2016) and problematic mobile phone use (Ksinan et al.,2021). The results of another study suggest that typical daily patterns of smartphone usage reflect boredom proneness. Therefore, boredom proneness can be automatically inferred from mobile phone usage (Pielot et al., 2015).

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Our result supported the second hypothesis that suggest no association between Nomophobia and Loneliness. Studies have revealed that lonely individuals are more inclined toward electronic media use and reveled association between Social media use, social anxiety, and loneliness (O'Day et al.,2021). An Other research has documented the relationship between loneliness and smartphone addiction as well (Bian & Leung 2014; Jiang et al., 2018; Aktürk et al,2018). The quick advancement of technology, its extensive application, and the impact of virtual settings can all be contributed to undergraduates' sentiments of isolation and alienation. An additional explanation for loneliness not acting as a predictor of problematic smartphone use may be inferred from an inadequate interpretation of this emotional state. For example, while early studies considered loneliness to be composed of only one dimension (Russell et al.,1984), later studies showed that loneliness is associated with two dimensions: Social loneliness, which derives from the lack of close relationships with others, and Emotional loneliness derives from not interacting in social circles (DiTommaso et al.,1997). Both social and emotional loneliness may lead to negative feelings about oneself (Oulasvirta et al.,2012), which may trigger individuals to use their mobile phones as a means of building relationships, satisfying their need to belong (Mahapatra,2019) and reducing the negative feelings that arise from difficult situations (Oulasvirta, et al., 2012).

It was hypothesized that there is no association between nomophobia and action orientation (H03), but the results reveal that both the domains of Action-orientation that is failure related action-orientation and decision-related action-orientation have a negative correlation with nomophobia. These individuals may dedicate their attention in a number of ways in order to finish activities and achieve their goals. Individuals that are more action-oriented are more efficient in their work (Kuhl, 1994). When faced with demands and threats, action-oriented persons tend to be self-motivated and select goals that align with their own interests (Koole & Jostmann, 2004). However, goal commitment was not observed in state-oriented individuals. More significantly, research has also discovered that goal commitment is positively associated with the congruence between goal and motives in action-oriented individuals (Brunstein, 2001). Furthermore, preoccupation results from state-oriented people's inability to voluntarily restrain intrusive thoughts that are triggered by negative affect after stress. However, action-oriented persons have the capacity to disengage from intrusive

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thoughts brought on by unpleasant experiences (Kuhl, 2000). So, it can be assumed that action-orientation individuals can control their behaviours and emotions thus less prone to nomophobia, whereas the state-orientated individuals are more inclined to become nomophobics.

This study provides insight into smartphone usage patterns and checks over the overuse of smartphones in order to prevent and manage further behavioural issues related to addiction or the onset of nomophobia. The implication of this study lies in the development of time management and self-regulatory models for students from a young age to enable them in management of addiction and anxiety and utilize their skills for a better future. The data can be used as a source database by parents, teachers, and counsellors to track children's mobile phone usage and conduct. As a result, they will be able to offer prompt intervention and therapy to stop and manage any additional effects of nomophobic behaviour. Furthermore, longitudinal studies on nomophobia can open the door to a much deeper comprehension of it when combined with other factors that may be influencing other researchers.

Conclusion

There is enough data to show that nomophobia is pervasive in our culture and that the current level of nomophobia is so risky that people should be urged to undertake a digital detox. The current study investigates the potential relationship between youth loneliness, boredom, action orientation, and nomophobia. It can be concluded on the basis of result that nomophobia negatively affect the action orientation in an individual thus make him more prone for addiction. It was also found that nomophobia and boredom are well connected. Boredom leads to maladaptive use of mobile phone and lead to anxiety in absence of mobile phone because it seems to be the only way to stay entertained or seek stimulation. It highlights the significance of researching nomophobia and the requirement for additional study in this area in order to identify the risk groups and establish protection strategies.

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